

REMARKS

The application has been amended so as to place it in condition for allowance at the time of the next Official Action.

Claims 1-12 were originally filed. This amendment adds new claims 13-20. Claims 1 and 13 are independent.

The specification has been amended as to form.

The abstract has been amended as to form.

The Official Action rejected the originally-filed claims under §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite.

These claims have been amended so as to remedy the stated basis of rejection. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

The Official Action rejected claims 1-2 and 7-12 as anticipated by ARAKI et al. 5,714,223.

Claims 3-6 were rejected as obvious over ARAKI et al. in view of MEHTA et al. 6,416,911; KOCHANOWSKI 5,442,870; MIZUOCHI 3,994,086; and NILSEN et al. 6,120,636.

No subject matter was indicated to be allowable.

The originally-filed claims have been amended so as to patentably recite the present invention. Accordingly, withdrawal of the pending rejections and allowance of all the claims are respectfully requested.

As amended, independent claim 1 recites a sheeting comprising a retroreflective base, an adhesive layer provided on a light-incident layer of the base, and a fluorine-containing

resin film contacting the adhesive layer and thereby laminated to the retroreflective base. The claim further recites that a printed layer made of discontinuous printed parts is provided intermediate the resin film and the adhesive layer.

The ARAKI et al. patent does not disclose such a structure. This reference does not teach an adhesive layer provided between a light-incident surface layer of the retroreflective base and the resin film in order to stick the retroreflective base to the resin film. Rather, the only adhesive layer taught by the reference is provided in order to stick the retroreflective sheet to an article body such as a plate of a traffic sign. See adhesive layer 6 in Figure 1 of the reference and adhesive layer 25 in Figure 2. Adhesive 6 of Figure 1 would be used to attach the retroreflective layer to some object such as a vertical surface. The adhesive layer 25 of Figure 2 serves a similar purpose, there being provided a further release paper to keep the adhesive from being contaminated prior to use.

Moreover, claim 1 recites the printed layer comprising discontinuous printing parts being provided between the resin film and the adhesive layer. This feature is not taught or suggested by ARAKI et al. In this regard, applicants respectfully disagree with the conclusion drawn by the Official Action.

The dependent claims are believed to be allowable at least for depending from an allowable independent claim.

Accordingly, allowance of claim 1 and the claims depending therefrom is respectfully requested.

As to the newly-introduced claims, these claims are also believed to be patentable and their allowance is therefore solicited.

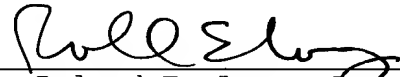
In view of the above, applicants believe that the present application is in condition for allowance and an early indication of the same is respectfully requested.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the abstract, specification and claims. The attached page is captioned "VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE."

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE ABSTRACT:

The Abstract of the Disclosure has been amended as follows:

Retroreflective sheeting [comprising] including a retroreflective base having a [smooth surface] light-incident layer [(4)] on its light-incident side and a fluorine-containing resin film [(1)] having a total light transmittance of 80% or more which is provided on the [smooth surface] light-incident layer [(4) via] by an adhesive layer [(3)], [wherein] a printed layer [(2)] made of discontinuous printed parts is provided between the film [(1)] and the adhesive layer [(3)]. The printed layer [(2)] does not cause the film [(1)] to separate.

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Page 3, the paragraph beginning on line 30 and bridging pages 3 and 4 has been amended as follows:

--The retroreflective base on which a fluorine-containing resin film is provided is not particularly limited, provided that it has a smooth surface layer on its light-incident side, i.e., it has a flat front face. For example, an enclosed lens retroreflective sheet as shown in Fig. 1, an encapsulated lens retroreflective sheet as shown in Fig. 2, an encapsulated cube-corner retroreflective sheet as shown in Fig. 3, and a metallized cube-corner retroreflective sheet as shown in Fig. 4

can be used. These types of retroreflective sheeting are known and commercially available. For details of structures and methods of production, reference can be made to, e.g., U.S. Patent 4,025,674 or JP-B-56-2921 (enclosed lens type), U.S. Patent 4,653,854 or JP-A-60-194405 (encapsulated lens type), U.S. Patent 3,417,959 (encapsulated cube-corner type) and U.S. Patent 3,712,706 or JP-A-49-106839 (metallized cube-corner type). Figs. 1 to 4 each present an enlarged cross-sectional view of an example of the retroreflective sheeting according to the present invention, in which the above-described retroreflective base has on the light-incident surface layer 4 thereof an adhesive layer 3, a printed layer 2, and a fluorine-containing resin film 1 in this order. In the cross-sections, numeral 5 indicates a beads fixing layer; 6 indicates glass beads; 7 is a focusing layer; 8 is a reflective layer; 9 is an air layer; 10 is a binder layer; 11 is a support layer; 12 is a prism layer; 13 is an adhesive layer; 14 is a separating material layer; and 15 is the incident light.--.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1 has been amended as follows:

--1. (amended) Retroreflective sheeting comprising a retroreflective base having a [smooth surface] light-incident layer on the light-incident side thereof and a fluorine-containing resin film having a total light transmittance of 80% or more which is [provided] laminated on said [smooth surface]

light-incident layer [via] on contact with an adhesive layer, wherein a printed layer made of discontinuous printed parts is provided between said fluorine-containing resin film and said adhesive layer.--

Claim 3 has been amended as follows:

--3. (amended) The retroreflective sheeting according to claim 1, wherein said printed layer is a layer of a repetitive pattern made up of individual printed parts [comprising a unit pattern] of a same design which are isolated from one another.--

Claim 4 has been amended as follows:

--4. (amended) The retroreflective sheeting according to claim 3, wherein maximum printed length of said [unit pattern is] individual printed parts are each 10 mm or smaller.--

Claim 6 has been amended as follows:

--6. (amended) The retroreflective sheeting according to claim 1, wherein the total area of said printed layer is 80% or less based on the entire area of said [surface layer] light-incident.--